

September 20, 2005

Ms. Kathleen Rasmussen  
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs  
Law Enforcement and Traffic Safety Division  
401 Adams Avenue, Room 466  
PO Box 5690  
Montgomery, Alabama 36103

**Re: National Environmental Policy Act Requirements**  
**Project: Paul Coverdell FY 2004 National Forensic Science Improvement Act**  
**Grant Number: 2004-DN-BX-0186**

Dear Ms. Rasmussen:

We have reviewed the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) that you provided for the Paul Coverdell FY 2004 National Forensic Science Improvement Act project for the Alabama Department of Forensic Science. The proposed project is being implemented with federal grant assistance from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice. We believe that at this time the draft EA and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are ready to be made available to the public and all interested and affected agencies for review and comment. Please initiate the following actions in order to accomplish this.

In accordance with the environmental assessment guidelines, please ensure that a notice of availability of the draft EA is published in a newspaper of general circulation in the cities of Mobile and Birmingham, Alabama to ensure notice to the general public that may be affected by, or be interested in, the implementation of your project. The notices should be published in easy to read type in the non-legal section of the newspaper and appear in two consecutive editions. Copies of the notice should be mailed directly to the owners and occupants of nearby or affected properties as well as any other individuals or organizations who have previously indicated an interest in the potential environmental impacts of the proposal. Copies of the notice should also be posted on and near the proposed sites. In addition to implementing the above public notice requirements, copies of the draft EA and FONSI should be sent to any public agency: (a) involved in the proposed project; (b) previously requesting a copy; or (c) required to receive a copy under local or state environmental assessment requirements.

At a minimum, the notice should contain the information in the attached draft FONSI, including a brief description of the action, where to obtain a copy of the EA/FONSI, and the closing date of the comment period. All agencies and other interested parties should be given 30 days to comment unless there is a specific requirement for a longer comment period under an applicable state or local requirement. Copies of the draft EA should be provided to agencies or interested citizens free of charge. The reproduction costs are allowable grant expenses.

Once the appropriate comment period has expired, you will need to address any comments received. If comments are received, please coordinate with me to address the comments and make the necessary revisions for the Final EA. Once the comment period has passed, and any comments received are incorporated into the document, the Final EA should be sent to me and your grant manager via email along with your recommendation as to whether or not an environmental impact statement should be prepared. We will review this material as

expeditiously as possible and inform you of our position. In developing our position, we will consider your recommendation under the definition or criteria for determining a significant environmental impact, as published by the Council on Environmental Quality and previously transmitted to you as part of NIJ's Draft Guidance for Preparing Environmental Assessments.

I am available to discuss questions you may have in regard to this letter and can be contacted by phone at (202) 912-0341, by fax at (202) 293-0787 or by e-mail at [lgutman@louisberger.com](mailto:lgutman@louisberger.com). Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lori Gutman, AICP  
The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

cc: Cheryl Crawford Watson, OJP/NIJ Environmental Coordinator  
([Cheryl.Crawford.Watson@usdoj.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Crawford.Watson@usdoj.gov))  
Dale Heideman ([Dale.Heideman@usdoj.gov](mailto:Dale.Heideman@usdoj.gov))

Attachment: Draft FONSI